THE
Benefit, Advantage
and Glory of Silent
MEETINGS

Both as it was found at the beginning, or first breaking forth of this clear manifestation of truth, and continues to be found, by all the Faithfull and upright in heart, to this day.

With a [illegible] for the stirring up, and incouraging of the [illegible] who are lately convinced, unto the [illegible] and diligent improving them, unto those [illegible] for which they serve.

Given forth by *George Keith* Prisoner for the Truth in the Tolbooth of *Edinbrough* the 10*th* of the first Month, 1670. in *Scotland*.

LONDON
Printed in the Year. 1670.

the Benefit & Advantage, and Glory

The Benefit, Advantage, and Glory of silent Meetings.

BEfore the breaking forth, of this clear manifestation of truth, that now shineth in great brightness and glory, which began in the Nation of England, some 26 years ago, or so, there was many people both in that Nation and elsewhere, in whom there was some true desires & breathings raised & begot after the Lord, by the secret workings of his Eternal power, insomuch that many in that day began to seek the Lord in great earnestness and zeal, upon whom he had caused his light so far to shine forth, that thereby they came to see their poverty, nakedness and emptyness, notwithstanding of the large and much profession, which they had made in divers sects, and also by the same, they came to see their want of the living God, though they had learned a notional and litteral knowledge of him, from them, who spoke weakly upon the Scriptures, what they had gathered from the Letter, by their hammerings and toolings upon them, and so it came to pass, that many who were diligent and zealous followers of these Ministers of the Letter, through these dawnings of the light of God and Christ, which began to appear in them, became to weary and tyre of that ministration they were under, which was at best but that of the Letter and foremost part also, had much of falsehood and untruth mixed in with it, from the world's spirit and wisdom, so that their doctrine had neither the sound words of truth, nor the vertue and life of truth to make it savoury and nourishing into the souls of the people, so that many came to loath and refuse it, for it appeared unto them; no better than as dead and corrupted water, yea as the waters of Egypt that became blood, which they loathed to drink off, and the same people who began to loath the doctrine and ministry of the National Priesthood, and also of others who pretended more, finding it both dead and corrupt, they found

perplexity and heavineſs of mind, as not knowing what to do, or whether to go; they were preſſed in ſpirit to leave and forſake the dead and corrupt miniſtry they were formerly under, as finding it hurtfull, yea killing (for the Letter killeth) but they knew not where to find; the living and true miniſtry, who might adminiſter unto them, that which could anſwer unto the living deſires of their ſouls. and could ſatisfie and nouriſh them, and at the ſame time there were divers, in divers parts. who had ſome inward true and living openings and manifeſtations of truth, but they were not come to a clear and ſound ſtate and condition in their own particulars, nor to a clear diſcerning of the manifeſtations and workings of truth from their own imaginations. and from the enemies tranſformings and likeneſſes, and yet in this uncleanneſs and unſoundneſs they went forth, & ſpoke, & declared & preached & writ many things, which becauſe they did in part iſſue or proceed from the light of truth, were much taking into their hungring and ſeeking ſouls, who had left the dead and taſtleſs Miniſtry they were formerly under, and ſo becauſe their was ſomewhat in the words, or declaration of theſe men, which did partly anſwer unto the witneſs and truth of God in their hearts, they began much to look after them, follow and hear them, and drink in their doctrine, even as the parched and dry Land, drinketh in the Rain of a Summer ſhower; yet this came to prove much unto the great hurt and loſs both of theſe Teachers and alſo of them, who gave up to be taught by them.

For their Miniſtry not ſtanding in that cleanneſs and ſoundneſs, either of Doctrine or Spirit, as was needful, it could not but prove as unwholſome and hurtful food, eſpecially ſeeing their was not that diſcerning begot in people, whereby they could make a clear differedce betwixt the pure & the impure, that which was of God, & that which was but of man, and of the enemy; betwixt the pure and clean grains; and the tares, for indeed in their Miniſtry, they did not ſow altogether clean grain, but many noiſome tares with it, and that in much more abundance, then the true wheat, *& the tares ſpring up, and choaked the good ſeed, and hindred it, ſo the good ſeed withered in many*, and in many others, was in a decaying and withering condi-

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tion but the tares waxed great and nourished, and as for those Teachers, who went forth as to sow, for most part, it proved most to their own loss and prejudice, for not being brought into a cleanness and soundness in their own particular conditions, neither as to Doctrine nor Spirit, the Serpent who beguiled the woman, betrayed the simplicity in them, and so through his subtlety drew them forth still further and further from the trne openings of truth which at sometimes were opened in them truly from the Lord out into their own vain imaginations and apprehensions, and also into the enemies transformings and likenesses: whereby the tender dawnings and breakings forth of truth became to be vailed and clouded in them, and the darkness prevailed to blind the eye, which had received some half opening, and so their latter condition was worse then the first, yea many of them became worse then others, as unsavoury salt, having run out from the sence & savour of that wch savoured them in some measure and thereby gave occasion of offence unto many people, for some of these aforesaid, having run out from the measure of truth in their own particulars vented and published both in words and writing; gross, unsound and pernicious doctrines and others of them became loose and desolate in their lives, all which the enemies of truth charged upon the truth it self and spoke evil of the way of it, unto many simple people who too much believed them. and so were scared and offended even at the appearance of truth it self.

And about the same time, the people, even these of them foremost part, who were most tender, ingenious and zealous, (through a weakness of understanding, and because of the customary way they had been used to) had too much an eye to words, and too much a life in them, for they could not meet together, but some behoved to speak, in doctrine exhortation or prayer, &c. Otherwise they would have thought the time mispent so much as passed away of it without words, for their minds were much drawn forth, seeking satisfaction, and refreshment in outward words, practices and observations, which yet they found not, but both their words and practices foremost part proved their burden, and they groaned under them, and yet they knew not what to do, for they saw

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no way how either to worship God, or profit their own souls, or one another, but as they thought was in words, or outward practices and observations, and yet they missed the kingdom, which they in some true measure desired, and so were scattered abroad, as in divers flocks and companies, like sheep without a shepherd, seeking the true food and pasture, but not finding it.

And the Lord who had pitty upon them of old, whom he beheld as sheep without a shepherd, and whose bowels yearned over them in the same yearnings of bowels, extended his tender mercies and compassions, into these, who at that time had tender breathings and desires raised in them after himself, and to know and worship him aright, and in the acceptable way, and he prepared messengers and sent among them, in a needful and acceptable time, who having attained unto the soundness and clearness, in their own condition, both as to doctrine and spirits, through the power and grace of the Lord with and upon them, (which others before them as aforesaid were not come into) preached the glad Tydings of the Gospel, in to purity and soundness, unto a people whom the Lord had prepared receive them, as he had prepared them to minister to them, the first principles whereof, were to this purpose or effect. That what was to be known of God, was manifest within, that the kingdom of God, was to be sought after and found within, by every man, in a heavenly seed and principle, which was of God in every man, the word near in the mouth, and in the heart; That God and Christ was to be sought within, found, received and injoyed within, in the measure of the light wherewith he did enlighten every one that comes into the world, and that whoever do truly believe in God and in Christ, must beleive in the light, wherewith Christ did enlighten them, who is given of God a light to lighten the Gentiles & the people, and who so believe in the light, which convinceth of sin, judgeth and reproveth it in thought, word and deed, come to receive life by it, and be made alive unto God, so as to have a sence of his divine power and vertue, and to see him, and behold him, and injoy him, and have fellowship with him, in which life they come to receive power over death sin and darkness, and in the same, they come to receive the true knowledge of God, and

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Christ; and the things pertaining to his Kingdom, and therein, and therefrom, and thereby they come to receive right thoughts and apprehensions of God, and also the right and sound words, which are fit to be spoken of him, and concerning him, and his way and Kingdom, and which thoughts and words had a manifestation of his heavenly life and vertue in them, as they were received in the living and eternal word, near and in the heart, and so that all thinking or speaking of God or to him or the things of his Kingdom behoved to have this rise, the word, light and life of God in the heart, otherwise they were all wroug dead and unsavoury, and so neither acceptable unto God, or profitable either unto the speakers or hearers, and in like manner all practises and works, which are not wrought in this principle; the light, life and spirit of God, within, are but dead and unprofitable, works and fruits of death and darkness, as not having the life of God, for their rise, spring and original, and so the first beginning of the ministry in great part, was, in the life and power of God, to call off people from all their dead and dark thoughts, words and works, as to God, and his way and worship, which were not brought forth in the life and light of God in the heart, were not thought in the life, spoken in the life, done and practiced in the life, as being all but false, unsound unprofitable, and unacceptable, and as the sound and clear ministration given them, in the light and life of God was to call people off from all the thoughts words and works of death & darkness, so was it also to call them off, and turn them, from the darkness it self, unto the light, which lighted every one of them, and from death unto the word of life, nigh unto every one, and which would give life unto every one, who became turned towards it, in the drawings and vertue thereof, and this was the clear and sound ministration, which the Apostles received from Christ and particularly *Paul*, who was sent unto the Gentiles to turn them from darkness into light, and from the power of Sathan unto God, which ministration, as it was greatly blessed of God, in the primitive times, unto that effect, so was it, and is it, in this our day, the work and labour of love of him, whom the Lord sent as the first of many others who came after, did greatly prospper, (though in much contradiction into many

who opposed, some through ignorance and others through malice) whereby in a small time many out of dizers sects and professions came to be turned into the light, and be convinced of it, and by it, that it was the very saving light of Christ Jesus, notwithstanding of all that Priests and Professors said or disputed to the contrary, for the ministration had that light and evidence, life and authority, yea power and dominion of truth in it, which even by a spiritual compulsion, forced an assent in the hearts of many, and the measure of truth which was clouded and vailed in many, came to be reached unto, through this ministration, so as to answer unto it, to the sufficient convincement of these, in whom it is thus answered.

And as for them, who came to be clearly and soundly reached, so as to feel the Power and life of God, in the ministration, reach into the measure and seed of truth in their own particulars: O what a day and time it was unto them, that was even such a day as they had never the like of it before, nor (in some sence) after it for it was a day unto them, both of joy and heavinesse, comfort and sorrow, light and darknesse life and death, their joy, and their comfort was in the morning dawnings of the beauty and glory of God, which begun somewhat to appear in the light, as they became turned towards it, but their heavinesse was in that they began to find the exceeding sinfulnesse of sin & how to feel themselves, so hedged & compassed about with intanglements & hinderances both within & without, but more especially within, to stop them from entring into the new & living & perfect way of God, which began to be revealed in the light, insomuch that they came to see, that these things which they formerly counted gain, were now dung and loss unto them, and that which they esteemed as their glory, became now their shame, as namely their large profession and righteousnesse, and way of worship which stood in dead and empty performances, in the oldness of the Letter, in which they had a life, and which had a life in them also, but it was the life of death, which reigned in them, and doth reign in all, from *Adam* unto *Moses*, yea and whose reign is not put down, until Christ the blessed seed and life be witnessed raised and revealed in the particular; and so this day of God

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brought death and darkness over all that false Life and Light, which had place in them formerly, and stained all their false beauty and glory, even all the Glory of flesh, or of the first-birth, in all the wisdom; counsel and knowledge thereof, and in all its thoughts and apprehensions of God, and in all its words, and works, and practices, and righteousness whereby it came to pass that these who seemed to have, and had much knowledge and understanding of God; and Christ, but it was according to the flesh or first birth, began now to see and be convicted, that they were very ignorant, so as even to say, surely I am more bruitish then any man, and I have not the understanding of a Man in me, and thus many who were teachers of others, for many years came to be convinced that they had need to learn the very first principles of the Doctrine of Christ, and so these who had stood in a long and large profession of words, and attained to great abilities that way, in doctrine, exhortation, and prayer, &c. Whether through education, or frequent practise, being come to a true and living sence and convincement, that it was all, but carnal, and fleshly, or at best stood in a great mixture having more of flesh then spirit in it, and more of death and darkness, then of life and light, which is hurtfull as aforesaid, came to be gathered out of all that bulk, and heap of words into the waiting place, in the measure of the light, which had convinced them, and given them some sence of their conditions, so as to wait upon the Lord in his light in all possible stilness and quietness, and silence of mind, not only out of all outward performances and words, but even out of all thoughts and apprehensions of God, or Christ, and all inward motions and workings, which had not the light, or word, or spirit of God in their hearts; for the rise & spring, & this they were brought unto, through the ministration aforesaid, which pointed or directed them unto this place, even silence, both as to words, and thoughts, and that both apart, and together, by which ministration also they were called, to assemble or gather together in the Name of Christ, whose name is the light, the wisdom and power of God, and the second *Adam*, the quickning spirit, to wait together in this silence.

So in this name they were called and directed to assemble or gather together, to wit, in the light, wisdom, power, and quickning spirit of God, so they were not to come in their own wisdom and spirit, or in the wisdom and spirit of the first *Adam*, as to meditate, teach, or pray, or give thanks, in the words, which that wisdom and spirit did teach them, for that had been to meet in the name of the first *Adam*, and not in the name of the second, whose name is the light and the life, and the power, and

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wisdom of God, as aforesaid, and so this wisdom and power, and name was to furnish them in all they did or spoke in their meetings or assemblies, and to this the Apostle directed the believers in his day, that whatsoever they did in word or deed, they should do it in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, if they taught, it should be in his Name, to wit in his light, life and power, and if they prayed it should be in this, and if they gave thanks it should be in this, and then the words uttered or expressed by them, should be spirit and life, that would both reach unto God for a sweet savour and odour before him, and also unto his witness in the heart, of them who heard, for what they spoke should not be the word of man but the word of God, Christ the word, the light, and the life, speaking in them, and through them, as Christ said unto the Disciples, *It is not you that speak, but the spirit of the Father which speaketh in you*, and according to this *Paul* said, *that no Man could call Jesus the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*, for the Name of the Lord is a living Name, and so cannot be named but by the power and vertue of his own life, indeed a man in his own natural spirit may pronounce the Letter of the Name, but the Letter is not the Name for the Name is the word of God, but the Letter is not the word, and so it is one thing to pronounce the Letter or Letters, but for another to name, or speak the word of God, yea or inwardly only to conceive it in the mind or heart, which none can do, but by the Holy Ghost.

Now about this time that divers were convinced as aforesaid and gathered together in diversdivers places, through very necessity, their meetings came to be silent, for some time, though the first rise and ground of their meeting in silence, was that they were taught it of the Lord, forasmuch as there were but few, who were then attained unto that soundness and clearness of condition, in their own particulars, so as thereby to be fitted and qualified in the word, life, power and wisdom of God, to minister unto others in divers places, friends being but very young, at that first breaking forth of Truth, and so their work was mostly it not only to joyn together, in a joint concurrence to wait upon the Lord, for the indwings of his power from on high, and to see the work and operation of his word light and life in them, every one being turned unto the manifestation thereof in their own particulars: For indeed in beginners or those who are but lately turned unto the Light and life of truth, it hath much to work brough in them and they have many steps of inward Tryals and exercise to pass through in the light and life of truth, before they attain unto that soundness and clearness in their own conditions whereby they can safely and purely administer the word and words of life unto others

thers without mixure, for first a man must be in a good measure gathered into the life and spicit of truth so as to be well rooted and fastned in it in his own particular, before he be in such a fit condition as to minister unto others, with safety and advantage. and the word of life must first have some free passage in a mans heart, mind and spirit, before it can have a free passage in the mouth, and it must have got some good measure of command and dominion over the heart, and the thoughts and affections thereof, otherwise it cannot so conveniently and readily have the command of the mouth, so as to order and direct it, that the mouth steddily and soundly, only as the instrument of the word and spirit of God, may only express or declare the living words of God otherwise (as where the heart is not under the command of the life as aforesaid) the mouth wil reel and stagger in its expressions, and be apt to speak the words of the wisdom and spirit of man, then of God; now as the words of the spirit of God and Christ are in the mouth, spirit and life, so the words of, or from the spirit of man though even gathered from the Scriptures, are instead of Spirit, but Letter, and instead of Life but death, the one is spirit and life, the other but letter and death, which proffits not but hurts, yea, even the mixture, (as where it is partly Letter, and partly spirit) as much as possible, is to be shunned and forborn especially, in this so clear and glorious manifestation of truth, which calleth out of all mixtures, both in words and works unto purity soundness and simplicity in all, and now doth more pressingly require it, then in the times of ignorance and darkness that are past.

Thus I say, That even very necessity at first occasioned their silent Meetings of Friends in divers places, every one being afraid to open the mouth, nor daring to open it till the Lord opened it, by the power and vertue of his own spirit and life, and though none durst speak or open a mouth, nor had received that spiritual power and ability to do it, yet a necessity and duty they found in it, to meet together, yea the least measure and appearance of life and light in every one did even draw them together and when, or wherever they came together in the drawings thereof, and and sat down together in stilness and quietness, every one being turned and gathered unto their particular measures, they came to find the benefit, advantage and glory thereof in a wonderful and unspeakable manner, for after this manner they became all as one body, and as members together of the body, and one of another, by reason of that wonderful and excellent and glorious unity, which the several measures of life and light, hath in the particular vessels and persons, For if corn fan

to be together, and that each of both be gathered unto their own measure of life, the measure of life in the one, doth after a secret and unspeakable manner, reach into the measure of life in the other, and flow forth into it whereby the one is raised, and strengthned and inlarged by the other, and as it were fed and refresh-t thereby, yea and the life in the one doth so joyn and unite its force and strength and vertue unto the other, that every particular feels the strength and vertue of the two fold measure of life, as it were doubled within themselves, and if they be three thus gathered together, the particular measure of life in every one, reaches unto every particular, so that one feels not only the vertue force and strength of his own particular measure of life, but also the very force and strength of the other two, so that his life is as it were strengthned, enlarged and refreshed as in a threefold degree, and so still as the number of these do increase, which one indeed to witness any measure of the life and light of God to spring up in them, all the particular measures of life in the particular vessels or persons, in whom it hath appeared, uniting in one even as many small streams, become as a large river of life, which in the wholeness or Universallity of it, hath its course, motion and operation, in and through every member, in some measure according to the capacity of each, and thus the whole Universal life and spirit of the whole body reacheth, in its whole vertue, in some measure unto every member for the quickning, refreshment, and edifying thereof, as even it is in the natural body, for the natural spirit that is Universally diffused through the whole, reacheth unto every member in the body, with its influence life and vertue, and a plain example whereof we have also in the light, that is natural, for if a company of people should come into a dark place, every one of them having a lamp or Candle lighted, each person injoyeth not only the light of his own, but also of all his neighbours, where each suffer their light freely to shine forth.

And of this friends having such manifest and clear experience in their own particulars, they became greatly indeared towards one another, in all pureness and tenderness of love, and finding the great benefit and advantage which they had in one anothers company, presence and fellowship, as of one being a strength to another their life and spirit reaching unto them, oft without all words, yea in the silence or ceasing of all words they were drawn to meet often together, for that in the presence and company of one another, they were inwardly refreshed, comforted, quickned and strengthned, through that communion and communication of the spirit and life of God, from vessel to vessel, as from one upon all, and from all upon one, and this is that communion of the Saints, which is a Mistery forever sealed from all Natural men, but is most open and clear to every Child of light yea even unto the youngest, who are but as babes and sucklings in the truth,

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And oft times, it so comes to pass, that one only particular person, is made an occasion of great refreshment, quickning and comfort unto many, yea unto a whole meeting, so that in good and certain experience, where divers have come together but life had but a weak or small manifestation in and among them, as being but young in the truth, and much death and darkness as yet having place which burthened and clouded the tender life, so that as it were the power of death and darkness could be felt to work strongly in the meeting, by reason of which, those who met had much ado to wrestle against the said dark power, yet the coming of one among them, and sitting down with them in the meeting, to wait together upon the Lord in pure silence, has occasioned life in great glory and dominion to shine forth, and flow like a mighty River, through the whole meeting and every particular member thereof, by which every particular could sensibly feel the power of darkness and death, which did burthen and weaken the meeting, and quench or stop the springing up of life, to be removed, by the force and strength of life which broke forth against it, and dispelled it, as ever the Sun in his strength dispelleth and breaketh a cloud into peices, the occasion of which hath been, that the one aforesaid, hath had the life of God, in his own particular raised into a large stature, and measure of power and dominion, whereby his life hath had its course through all that darkness that stood in the way to the reaching the weak and small measures of life, in the others, and so by its influence quickning and strengthning life in every particular, till it was raised over all that stood in its way and all were abundantly refreshed comforted and quickened and such through the goodness and providence of good, are sent unto others, or raised up among them, to be unto them as nursing fathers, and stewards and shepherds, unto whom as it were the keyes of the kingdom are given, that they may open it unto others; not but that it is possible to be opened, even without all instruments from without, yet the service and benefit of instruments fitted and prepared of God hath been, and is found to be great unto the more abundant opening of it, and helping the weak and feeble unto the more ready and easie entrance into it, wherefore such cannot but be dearly loved and honoured in the truth, for their work sake, and because of that excellent measure of life in them, which hath such universal influence and service unto all.

And though the unity and fellowship of the children of light and truth doth not simply consist in their outward nearness, company or presence for that though at never so great an outward distance, their unity remains in that spirit which reacheth over and through all yet it is certain that even their being together in the outward (when they are gathered in the name of Christ as aforesaid, as in the particular measure of his Life and Light made manifest in them) doth greatly conduce and contribute to the

crease and strengthen their unity, and to make their fellowship and communion of life the more sensible as is known and witnessed by certain experience, for that when they are outwardly present life hath an opportunity to convey it self unto one another, by and through the natural spirit and the very face of one sharpneth another as Iron doth Iron, for where life is raised in the heart, it hath its Image on the very face or countenance, which is a secret vertue reacheth unto others. *Yea not only doth life conveys self, and its pure influence through the voice and sight, but even through the taking one another by the hand, where it is done in pure and undissembled love, and by the laying on of hands also, as was witnessed in the primitive times, so that those who were indued with a large measure of the life and spirit of God, while they laid hands on them who believed, vertue went forth from that force and strength of life in them, and reached unto those on whom hands were laid whereby they came to feel the life to be raized in their own particulars and the power of the Holy Ghost to fall, or break forth upon them, as even so it is witnessed at this day, in and among the children of truth, though the form or formality of laying on of hands, that is in the false Church, which hath only the empty and bare imitation is not regarded.*

And thus now it being showed, how great an advantage and benefit the children of light and truth have in their meeting together, through the communication of Life from one to another, yea from all to every one and from one to all, and that without all words as well as with them the benefit and advantage of their meeting together, even in silence, cannot but be manifest, and this serves to answer that common objection used by many, who say we may sit silent at home, and wait in silence, in our own houses and so be as much edified, as to come to a silent meeting, where nothing is spoke for our instruction or learning, to which I say, may if your outward liberty and health can permit you to come and yet you come not, but stay at home you cannot profit, nor be edified so much at home, though you should give your selves to waiting in silence as by coming to the meeting of the Lords people and waiting together with them in silence, first because to meet together is the ordinance of God, which he doth bless, yea he hath promised that where two or three do meet together in his Name, he will be in the midst of them, and this promise is to meeting simply in his Name, though there should be no speaking among them but secondly because as is said, through that universal influence of Life, which the whole meeting hath upon every particular life, to raise and refresh and strengthen life in every particular, therefore it is manifest, that it is more profitable and edifying to wait with

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others, where opportunity can be had then alone, for while we wait with others, we become a strenght hand help unto one another in waiting which many can seal the truth of, by certain experience who have found much more ready and easie access & entrance to wait upon the Lord, & a much more freedom of mind from vain thoughts and encumbrances while they were waiting with others, then while alone, as also many has been convinced & brought to the knowledge of the truth by coming to silent meetings & seeing as is showed that life doth readily most prevail and abound while they wait together surely these occasions cannot but be the more edifying & profitable, when rightly improved, for when life is most raised, and doth most prevail & abound in the heare, then a man hath the best opportunity to feel the operation, of it in him, to work and purge out the old nature & spirit, with the works thereof & to leaven him into a new lump, so as to mould and transform him, into its own pure similitude & image.

And so these who came together, to meet after this manner in silence, so that they would sit together many hours in a deep silence and quietness, came to find great benefit and advantage in them, yea and a great glory, though such meetings became the worlds wonder, and natural and dark spirited men, did scorn and delude them, as they do unto this day, yet the Children of truth found them and do find them the most profitable & edifying meetiugs, that ever they were at, where all flesh is made silent, and the Lamb alone is waited for, to appear in his Temple, and speak forth his holy mind will and councell, in such vessels, as are fitted and prepared of him, and these who met together in this silence, where at that time perhaps not one in the meeting had a mouth opened, or utterance given them, iu the life and spirit of God, came in due time, to receive the opening of the mouth, in a very large and powerful and glorious manner as continues unto this day with them, who yet remain alive in the body and now many have received an opening of mouth, and come to witnesse, the word of life sprung up, in great power and glory, to the putting words into their mouths, which are spirit and life that Minister grace largely unto the hearers, and are a sweet and a pretious savour, and odour unto God even a sacrifice of a sweet smell, and so they witnessed the promise fulfilled unto them upon the matter (though the many tougues and languages, with other circumstantial things be not) as the Disciples did, who were commanded to tarry at *Jerusalem*, and wait for the promise of the Father, which was the powring forth and effusion of the holy Ghost, or holy spirit and life of God, upon them, and as they waited so it came to pass, that on the day of *Pentecost*, being assembled together, with one accord they were filled therewith, and began to speak

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forth the wondrous things of God, as they felt them in their hearts, and as the spirit gave utterance.

And seeing they were not commanded to speak, preach, nor prayuor sing, but in the Name of Christ, that is in his life, spirit and power as it moved them, it is manifest that at times, the Disciples, or Christians in the primitive times, had silence among them, as we now have, seeing they were not to speak, but when the life moved, and surely there were among them, who did not always feel the motion of life to speak, nor were always in a capacity or condition for speaking, and though now since the glorious increase and growth of truth, few meetings but have some or other, to whom a Ministry in words is given more or less, so that seldome or rarely meetings are under a necessity to be wholly silent, from first to last, yet becaufe of the great advantage and benefit and Glory that is found in them, friends are many times willing and desirous to sit down and feed together in silence, upon the heavenly and invisible life, so as to reach unto one another, in the communications of life, and feel the states and conditions of one another therein in silence, and injoy that secret and hid fellowship together which the world knoweth not, so as even to be silent though both a liberty and ability in the life may be present with divers) where no pressure nor pressing occasion is found) to utter words which indeed hath a great glory in it, that people should converse together in spirit and deep silence, and without all words.

Now among divers great and blessed advantages and benefits, which they who came to be convinced did find, in the sitting down together to wait in silence, there were some that in the silence, their minds being turned towards the light and life of God, which had appeared to them, they came to find there minds stayed therein; and thereby, for a great and mighty power broke forth, in the light, unto which their minds were turned and did gather their minds into it more and more, whereby they came to know a being planted and grounded, and rooted and setled and established in the truth, and in the light, and life, and spirit, and power thereof, and so they came to be gathered out of all the tossings, and wavering of mind, and out of all the incumbrances and wandrings into stability and steddiness in the truth, which was even as to be delivered from a stormy and tempestuous Sea, and brought to dry land, and thus also they came to be gathered out of all their own thoughts and imaginations and uncertain conjectures, and guessings concerning the things of God, and religion, into the clear and certain manifestation of truth, by which also they came to receive an inward discerning, so as to distinguish and

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make a difference infallibly betwixt things and things in them, as to see and know and feel what was of God, and what was not of him, but of man or of Satan, and so as they waited in this silence, their minds being turned towards the Lord, they could discern the right and wrong spirit, and the work and motion of each, and came to see, what was to be kept and spared, and what was to be denyed, what was to be preserved alive, and cherished and nourished, and what was to be slain, and famished and starved, and so in the silence they came to find the pure judgement of the Lord, to pass over and through all in them, as the refiners fire, which purifieth the Gold and Silver, but consumeth the dross and maketh a clear separation, and the power of the Lord God was found and felt to work mightily in them, for the breaking down and killing, and consuming, and destroying every evil thing and work, which had place in them, and removing and taking out of the way, whatever, clouded, or vailed, or burthened the pure life to arise and shine forth, and so the mountains which were raised over the seed and burthened it, came to be shaken, yea the Earth and the Heavens, (by which these bodily quakings and tremblings did also seize upon divers, and from this the Name *Quakers* was in scorn cast upon friends) that the mountain of the Lord might be raised up a top of them all, and so through the mighty workings of Gods power, which was revealed in the light to which their minds was turned, in silence, they came to be brought out of the mixture wherein they stood formerly into a clearness and soundness of condition in the truth, both as to spirit and judgement, in their own particulars, and so they came to a clear and sound understanding of the things of God, and of Truth, and Religion, and the way of worship, and to have clear and sound thoughts and apprehensions of them, which did purely and clearly arise in the light, in which their minds became stayed, and so in due time a pure and clear ministration in words was given unto many of them, so that they preached pure and sound and clear Doctrine, in a pure and clear manifestation of life, unto which pure ministration many came to be brought, who had a ministration formerly among people of divers sects, and opinions which stood in the mixture aforesaid, that was not clear grain and food, and therefore hurt both themselves and others, but being gathered together unto this pure ministration (which they received, by sitting down to wait upon the Lord to learn together in silence with all subjection, the pure and clear and perfect knowledge of things) they came both to be saved themselves, and to be made instruments all to

save many others. And so in silence they came to receive these many pretious openings and discoveries of Truth and Religion and the Scriptures were largely & purely opened unto them concerning these many things, which are the matters of difference between the friends and children of truth, and the Priests and Professors, and these, together with many pretious and excellent gifts of the spirit, and also much inward peace, joy, refreshment and consolation, in the holy spirit, and much increase of life and Grace, and Righteousness, and much beauty, and glory, and dominion in the life, were among the blessed and glorious advantages they received in their meeting together, and waiting together upon the Lord in pure silence and stilness, and which are all known and witnessed and found at this day, (even as at the beginning) by them, who faithfully and diligently do observe them and improve them.

And by this means also, the Truth came greatly to spread and gain ground, and so doth at this day, even in that these who were convinced in all the parts and corners of the Land, where the sound of Truth came did meet together, though there were but two or three in a place and sat down together to wait upon the Lord in pure silence, out of all their own thoughts and words, and works, which was a great and loud testimony, and did preach all abroad far and near, which gave occasion unto many, who had some measure of simplicity and tenderness to consider the thing, and the signification of it, that in a time wherein Professors had so much a life in words, as if all religion had been turned into words, and in speaking and hearing, as indeed it was so with most part, that they knew no more of it but to hear and talk words, and so their Religion was a monster, as if all the body were become the tongue and the ear) that a people should be raised up to meet together in silence, and in silence to be edifyed, and taught and instructed more then in all the words they had formerly heard or spoken, and in silence to worship God, and pray, and give thanks, and be helped and strengthned one by another, this gave occasion and doth and will give occasion still more and more, unto many, that have any measure of tenderness and simplicity to look beyond words into the inwards and substance of Religion, and indeed hereby many come to be convinced, more then by all the preachings in words, that ever they heard, the very silence and silent meetings of friends preached unto them so convincingly, and reached them, that they came both to confess and own the truth, and to sit down in silence with them, who were formerly gathered, turning in their minds to the

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light whereby they came to be partakers of the benefits of silence, as aforesaid with them, and so they came to see the proportion of the true Religion, which is as a well proportioned body, and is not all tongue, or ears, but hath many other parts and members, and these far greater, for the tongue as said *same is but a little member*, and so indeed the words, (which the tongue can utter and answers thereunto) are but a very little part, in respect of these many other things which pertain unto the true Religion, and even as in the Natural body, many other members receive power to execute and do their proper and respective offices, before the tongue, as we see in Infants, who can use divers members of their body, but cannot speak with the tongue, so is it, even as to to the true Religion, which first gives power, as to the use of divers other things relating thereunto, before it give power, as to speak of them, so that obedience unto the truth, and the practice of a holy life and conversation, doth most naturally proceed the speaking of or concerning the truth, and this is the order of Christ, *who said he that keepeth my Commandments, and teacheth men so to do*, so here is first keeping the Commandments before teaching unto others) *the same shall be great in the Kingdom of heaven*,

And so friends being turned towards God to wait upon him, for his teachings in their silent meetings, have not their meetings to depend upon any speakers, or speaker without, whatsoever and therefore they can and do meet together with advantage, when they know not of any speakers, and thus their meetings are constantly kept up for a testimony to Truth, and the edification of themselves, as also for the reaching unto others, whereas among all other professions and professors, it is quite otherwise, for if they have no speaker, they have no meeting, and so their meetings depends upon the words and lips of men, as if they could receive no good in meetings, but what dropped from the lips of men, whereas the good that friends look at, and wait for in meetings, and do receive is far beyond all words whatsoever, even the very words of life, (which words are pretious unto them, notwithstanding and desirable in their place) and that good is the life itself, which was before words and will be when words are not, and in which all words are to cease, but the life indureth for ever, in which friends have fellowship with God, and one with another.

And as touching silent meetings or meeting together in silence, it is not only traceable among the Disciples & Apostles in the primitive times as afore

foresaid, but even in the Old Testament [illegible] although it be thought such a strange thing among Priests and [illegible] generally) for did not Job and his friends meet together in [illegible] Job. 3. 13. *And did not Ezekiel sit among the Captives? do[illegible] his mouth to any sill at the end of them, when the word of [illegible]m*, Ezek. 3. 15. 16. *Yea and the Ilands are bid be silent before* [illegible] and said Zechariah *Let all flesh be silent before the Lord, for* [illegible] *out of his holy place*, Zech. 2. 13.

George Keith.

Post-script.

Post-script.

The Co[illegible] letter written from *Germany* by *St*[illegible] to friends, which doth fait with [illegible]ing Paper.

ALl Fri[illegible]ere who have tasted of the goodness of God, kee[illegible] your thereof, and let not your minds be stolen away from that which is living, for that which is living cometh from above, and makes you lively, but that which is corruptible cometh from the earth, and brings death with it over your Souls, and therefore watch in diligence to retain the favour of the life of Truth that you may live, from a sence that Christ liveth in you, who is the seed, the truth, the Noble Plant, and grows and bringeth forth Fruit in you.

And all Friends every where who thus keeps and receive the favour of the Life in them, they will come to feel daily quickening thereby, and will have power over the nature that is dead to all good works, and especially to waiting upon God with a fixed and stayed mind. Nothing so hard as this to that old and corrupt nature which is soon weary. This is that nature which can not watch with Christ one hour, but let his trials and sufferings be never so great, this leads from watching to sleeping and hath no fellowship with the seed of God in his sufferings, and that have noke in its dominion. And where this drowsie nature is unmortified, it keeps you in the weakness out of the power, and this bringes out of the favour and feeling of the [illegible] and in the meetings unprofitable, and [illegible] custom to be allowed and subjected to, [illegible] that is to say, into a pretending to waiting upon God [illegible] sleep [illegible] in the meeting, and then leaving the [illegible] God's quiet [illegible] from him, even into the [illegible] of the flesh, in which the Apostle said they that live [illegible] please God.

Therefore Dear Friends in the name of God [illegible]

sider what you do when you assemble together, and let it be in the name of Jesus, that is in his power, not in the weakness, nor in the flesh like a fleshly meeting, but in his Name and power make war with the flesh, and with the drowsie spirit that lodgeth there and in the Faith overcome it; and be not overcome by it for that is bondage. And hold your meetings in the spirit where every one is made alive and flourisheth, and grows in life and in dominion, and shines forth to the glory of God, and to the comforting and refreshing one of another.

For now as any one suffereth himself to be overtaken with sleep in a meeting, he looseth the sence of the power of God, he becomes a grief to the diligent, and an evil example to the negligent, and brings himself under the Judgment of Gods power in his own conscience, which when he awaketh riseth up against him and also he is under the Judgement of the power in the whole meeting, which when he comes to a true sence of, will be no light thing, and further if any that are unbelieving comes in among you and see such things among you, that make a Profession of an inward power and an inward quickning spirit, and of a worship that is inward in the spirit and truth, herein causeth such the name of God to be dishonored, the way of truth to be holden in little esteem by such who know it not in themselves, and a stumbling block is hereby laid in their way to hinder them from any farther seeking after the truth. Oh Friends consider these things, and be all diligent in this matter and let not that earthly part have liberty, but let it be kept in the Cross till it dyes, or else it will keep and hold you dead and unsensible of God, or one another. And this is that hath hindred the growth of many, namely their carelessness in coming to meetings, and their slothfulness when they are there. Therefore for time to come let every one that bears the profession of truth be diligent in the work of God, and be good examples to each other, and observe your time and hour of coming to meeting, and set not one hour, and then come at another,

nother, and neglect not your middle week meetings by reason of your outward occasions, for that will not bring a blessing upon your affairs, but let all things give way to the service of God, and then all things shall work together, for good unto you, and there shall be no lack of any thing that is good for you, So dear friends in the true love of God have I writ this unto you, as it lay upon me from the Lord, as a word of exhortation to stir up the pure mind in you all: and the God of power and strength give you of his might, and of his power to help you in all your necessities, and in all your combates and strengthen your faith, in which and by which the Victory is obtained, which is the desire of my soul for you all, who am your friend in the fellowship of the Gospel.

Written in Germany in the 4th Month, 1669.

Written in Germany in the 4th Month 16

THE END.